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Patrick Administration Grant to Fund Rail Trail in Haverhill *State Provides \$400,000 to Convert Section of Rail Corridor for Recreation*

HAVERHILL – Secretary Ian Bowles today announced that he had approved a grant of \$400,000 to help the City of Haverhill acquire a soon-to-be abandoned section of railway for a recreational trail and greenway. The City intends to use approximately 1.1 miles of rail corridor from the long-dormant “Georgetown Branch” owned by the Boston & Maine and Springfield Terminal railways to create a rail trail running along the south bank of the Merrimack River from the Comeau Bridge to Haverhill Paperboard.

The Bradford Rail Trail Project fits into other regional and state-supported trail efforts under way, linking two MBTA commuter rail stations, in Haverhill and Bradford, and leveraging \$2 million in state and federal funds already allocated to the Haverhill Boardwalk on the north side of the Merrimack River in downtown Haverhill. The result will be a 2.5 mile walking loop that provides benefits to Haverhill’s downtown, local merchants, new residents filling Haverhill’s old mills, and tourists.

“Governor Patrick and I are glad to be able to provide state support for this worthy and timely project,” said Secretary Bowles. “The City of Haverhill is working hard to leverage its proud history and the natural beauty of the Merrimack River for a new era. The Bradford Rail Trail will become the latest amenity the City provides residents and visitors.”

“This rails to trails project provides the citizens of Haverhill a scenic and safe way to enjoy the outdoors and is an essential component to the continuing renaissance of the City of Haverhill,” said Senator Steven Baddour. “I’d like to thank Secretary Bowles and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs for their support and help in moving this project forward and I look forward to continue working with state and local officials to ensure a successful outcome.”

“I am thrilled the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has chosen to award Haverhill these funds,” said Representative Brian Dempsey. “Acquiring this parcel of land is an important step toward utilizing the Merrimack River for the ongoing development of downtown.”

“I am extremely pleased that the City of Haverhill is receiving these funds from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs,” said Representative Barbara L'Italien. “These funds will assist the City in creating a new recreational area for the citizens to enjoy.”

“These are tough budget times, so it’s always good to see a little extra come Haverhill’s way,” said Representative Harriett Stanley.

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